

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR IN NP

SUBJ: INDO-NEPALESE PRESS WAR RESUMES

REF: KATHMANDU 2512

1. SEMI-OFFICIAL RISING NEPAL UNDER HEADLINE "MALICIOUS WRITINGS IN INDIAN PRESS PUZZLE, PAIN NEPALESE OBSERVERS" HAS TAKEN NOTE OF AFTICLE WRITTEN BY KULDIP NAYAR IN JUNE 1 STATESMAN.

2. NAYAR ARTICLE CENTERS ON TWO ISSUES SMOLDERING IN BILATERAL RELATIONS: ANTI-INDIAN PROPAGANDA DISTRIBUTED BY PRC EMBASSY IN KATHMAND AND "EFFORTS OF CERTAIN PEOPLE TO KEEP SIKKIM ISSUE ALIVE." ARTICLE CHARGES, INTER ALIA, THAT FONMIN CHAVAN HAD THREATENED LAST DECEMBER TO ALTER ITS ATTITUDE TOWARD NEPALI CONGRESS PARTY EMIGREES IN INDIA IN VIEW OF "KATHMANDU'S ATTITUDE" ON SIKKIM. NAYAR ADDS THAT WHILE IN KATHMANDU CHOGYAL MET "THE CHINESE AND AMERICAN AMBASSADORS . . . AND HASTENED HIS OWN EXIT." ARTICLE ALSO SAYS THAT PAK EMBASSY IN KATHMANDU HAS SOUGHT AGENTS AND INFORMATION FROM INDIAN ARMY GURKHAS ON LEAVE IN NEPAL AND THAT HMG HAS DONE NOTHING TO "STEP HOSTILE MIZOS FROM COMING TO NEPAL," WHERE THEY ALLEGEDLY HAVE HAD REGULAR CONTACTS WITH PAK AND CHINESE EMBASSIES.

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3. RISING NEPAL, IN STORY OBVIOUSLY GOVERNMENT INSPIRED,

RETALIATES BY NOTING THAT "TONE OF SUCH MALICIOUS WRITINGS MINIMIZES IMPORTANCE OF FRIENDLY RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND NEPAL." IT CATEGORICALLY DENIES CHARGE THAT HMG HAS OR IS SUPPORTING ANTI-INDIAN ELEMENTS IN SIKKIM. AS FOR CHARGES THAT CHOGYAL MET WITH CHINESE AND U.S. AMBASSADORS, SUCH SUGGESTIONS ARE "RIDICULED" SINCE ALL CORONATION GUESTS (INCLUDING CHOGYAL WHO IT STATES "APPARENTLY" HAD GOI PERMISSION TO COME TO KATHMANDU) MIXED FREELY WITH ONE ANOTHER. HMG, RISING NEPAL STATES, HAS IN FACT SHOWN "CONSIDERABLE RESTRAINT" IN FACE OF "FLOOD OF CRITICAL PUBLICITY" IN INDIA. AS FOR ALLEGATIONS THAT PAKISTANIS ARE CONTACTING GURKHAS OR MIZOS, HMG AUTHORITIES ARE "UNAWARE" OF ANY SUCH ACTIVITIES.

4. COMMENT: GON WASTED NO TIME IN RESPONDING TO NAYAR ARTICLE WHICH IT VIEWS AS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT IN VIEW OF HIS REPORTEDLY CLOSE RELATIONS WITH INDIAN MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS. IN DISCUSSION WITH EMBOFF JUNE 3, UNDERSECRETARY IN MFA IN CHARGE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS ISHWARI PANDE SAID THAT GON WAS "PARTICULARLY TROUBLED THAT THIS JOURNALIST HAD ACCESS TO INFORMATION NOT NORMALLY GIVEN TO JOURNALISTS." PANDE SAID THAT NEPAL HAD APPEALED "ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS AND IN WRITING" TO PRIC EMBASSY HERE TO ABIDE BY THIRD COUNTRY RULE AND TO REALIZE EMBARRASSMENT CAUSED GON BY ANTI-INDIAN PROGAGANDA. AT SAME TIME, HOWEVER, GON NOTES THAT IDENTICAL PRESS RELEASES ARE BEING DISTRIBUTED IN NEW DELHI BY PRC EMBASSY THERE. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, HE SAID, IT WAS DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND INDIA'S GREAT CONCERN.

5. MAYAR ARTICLE WHICH COMES SHORTLY AFTER KOIRALA INTERVIEW (REF A) IS NOT GOING TO EASE APPREHENSIONS IN KATHMANDU, SINCE UNLIKE KOIRALA PIECE STATESMAN ARTICLE WILL BE READ HERE AS COMING FROM GOI SOURCES. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER FULL SCALE PRESS WAR WILL NOW RESUME AFTER RECENT PERIOD OF RELATIVE TRANQUILITY. QUANTON

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